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FOOD NEWS

FOR CONSUMERS

United States Department of Agriculture Volume 3 Number 2 Summer 1986

P R O T E I N

GETTING
WHAT
YOU
NEED
FOR
BODY
FUNCTION

Skin,
fingernails
and muscle
tissue . . . just a
few of the body
parts amino acids
continually
repair



A NEW GUIDE —
Cutting Down on Dietary Sodium
Chart gives sodium in common foods

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Summer 1986

Vol. 3, No. 2

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PERSPECTIVES



Dear Reader:

April 20-26 was National Consumers' Week and, as is customary, there were special articles in the press, discussions and interviews on radio and TV, and meetings by public-spirited organizations dedicated to consumer interests.

We at USDA felt very much a part of these activities. But for us, *every* week is consumers' week. Actually, our consumer information activities go on daily. Witness the efforts of the Extension

Service, the Economic Research Service, the Food Safety and Inspection Service, the Food and Nutrition Service and the Human Nutrition Information Service. These agencies provide the public with information on the latest USDA findings in nutrition, health and agricultural research on an ongoing basis.

This information finds an eager audience too. People young and old want to know more about making correct food choices and proper handling of food. So, in addition to standard press releases and brochures, we also now run a toll-free Meat and Poultry Hotline (800-535-4555) to help consumers handle problems with meat and poultry products. And the Food Safety Poster Contest for school children teaches basic food safety concepts to the young. Stay tuned on the poster contest — this year's winners will be announced in May.

Interested in publications? Of course there's FOOD NEWS FOR CONSUMERS magazine, our periodic feature stories on timely issues, and, in "Pick-of-the-Pubs," page 14, you'll find a listing of other current food and nutrition publications. Last year, to meet a strong demand for nutritional information, we updated the "Dietary Guidelines for Americans." We are following that pamphlet with seven mini-bulletins, each devoted to a single guideline. We have also updated the popular *Nutritive Value of Foods* (Home and Garden Bulletin No. 72, \$2.75), adding information on sodium and cholesterol.

To address the problems of small households and people with limited income, we've issued *Thrifty Meals for Two: Making Your Food Dollars Count* (Home and Garden Bulletin No. 244, \$2.50). These publications are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20401. Also of interest is "What's Happening to Food Costs?," available upon request from the Economics Management Staff-USDA, 1301 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005-4788.

In many ways, USDA is reaching out to consumers. This year, we plan to continue our efforts with the media to reach as wide an audience as possible. If you have ideas on how we can do this better we'd appreciate hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ann Collins Chadwick

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Consumer Education

Hotline Calling — Storm Warnings!

According to the National Weather Service, the hurricane season for North America's coastal regions begins June 1. In other parts of the country, spring and summer are tornado season.

Many storms cause power failure, jeopardizing food stored in home refrigerators and freezers. To help you weather the storms, here are answers to "power's off" food safety questions often heard on USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline (800-535-4555).

Q. Help! The storm's over, but the freezer's off. What can I do?

A. First, keep what cold air you have inside — don't open the door any more than necessary.

Second, you'll be relieved to know that a full, large freezer will hold at freezing temperatures about 2 days; a half-full freezer about 1 day.

If your freezer is not full, group packages together so they form an "igloo" protecting each other.

For refrigerators with freezer units, you can put block ice in that section and place all your refrigerated perishables there. Group meat and poultry to one side or on a tray so that if they begin thawing, their juices won't get on other food.

If you think power will be out several days, try to find some dry ice. Follow the handling instructions carefully. You don't want to touch dry ice (it would remove skin) or breathe the fumes in an enclosed area.

Q. The power's been off for several days. I need a list of which foods I can save and which I should throw away.

A. You'll have to evaluate each item separately. See the chart for different types of frozen and refrigerated food. Generally, be very careful with meat and poultry products or any food containing milk, cream, sour cream or

soft cheese. When in doubt, throw them out.

Remember, you can't rely on appearance or odor. Do not taste foods to determine safety. Some foods may look and smell fine but — if they've been held at room temperature too long — food poisoning bacteria may have multiplied to disease-causing levels.

Q. How can I plan ahead before the next storm? I don't want to go through this again.

A. Our Hotline home economists suggest the following preparations.

- Stock up on shelf-stable foods: Canned goods; sterile fruit juice in wax-paper cartons; the new, "no-freeze" dinners in paper cartons that last 6-8 months.

- Plan ahead for ice: Buy some freezer-pak inserts and keep them frozen; keep a cooler on hand; freeze water in plastic containers.

- Know in advance where you can buy dry and block ice.

- Develop emergency freezer-sharing plans with friends in another part of town or in a nearby town.

— Liz Lapping

The Hotline is open weekdays, 10 to 4, Eastern Time.

When to Save and When to Throw

FROZEN FOODS

MEAT/POULTRY

Beef, Veal, Lamb, Pork
Poultry
Variety Meats (liver, kidney, heart, etc.)

Casseroles, Stews, Pies, Combination Dishes

DAIRY ITEMS

Foods containing dairy products
Hard cheese, butter and margarine

VEGETABLES, FRUITS & JUICES

Garden

Commercially Packaged

REFRIGERATED FOODS:

Milk

Fruit juices, opened

Eggs — Fresh

Hardboiled

Hard cheeses, Butter and Margarine

The Latest Live-in Calorie Counter

When there's no cheating, why do some people get fat but others don't when they eat the same foods? Scientists at USDA's Agricultural Research Center in Beltsville, Md. are developing a live-in calorie counter, known as a human calorimeter, to solve this mystery.

"Naturally, we can't dismiss basic nutrition. If you eat too much, you will probably gain weight," says Dr. C. E. Bodwell, who heads the center's Protein Nutrition Laboratory. "However, with the calorimeter, we can study the amount of energy foods supply and how people make use of the energy." Heat sensors in the unit's

walls measure how many calories subjects expend.

"We'll also be able to determine if people use energy from one food better than another and how much energy is actually burned while relaxing or doing strenuous exercise."

The calorimeter, approximately 10 feet by 12 feet, resembles a large refrigerator on the outside, but has enough room inside for a bed, chair and a small battery-operated television. Energy from the television will be measured and subtracted from the total output of the calorimeter, explains Bodwell.

Depending on the diet and exercise program being studied, some volunteers may stay at the research center

o Throw It Out

Ice Crystals Still Intact, Food Still Cold (40°F or under)	Thawed, But Held Above 40°F Under 2 Hours	Held Above 40°F For Over 2 Hours
Refreeze Refreeze Use within 48 hours. Do not refreeze.	Cook and serve, or cook and refreeze. Cook and serve, or cook and refreeze. Cook and serve immediately.	Discard Discard Discard
Cook and serve immediately or cook and refreeze. Do not refreeze previously cooked dishes.	Cook (or reheat thoroughly) and serve immediately.	Discard
Cook and serve immediately. Refreeze	Discard Refreeze or refrigerate	Discard Refreeze or refrigerate
Refreeze. May lose some texture and flavor. Refreeze. May lose some texture and flavor.	Juices — Refreeze. Vegetables, fruits: Cook and serve immediately or cook and refreeze. Juices — Refreeze. Others — Discard.	Discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops. Discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops.
Discard 8 hours after power loss. Safe unrefrigerated. Discard if cloudy, bubbling, fermented, yeasty or moldy. Safe unrefrigerated 5-7 days. Discard if shells are cracked or odor or discoloration is present. Discard if held above refrigerator temperature (40°F) over 2 hours. Safe unrefrigerated if well wrapped. Discard if mold or rancid odors develop.	Fresh Fruits & Vegetables Fresh Meats and Poultry Lunch meats/Hotdogs Mayonnaise, opened Opened containers of Vinegar and Oil Salad Dressings, Jellies, Jams, Mustard, Ketchup, Pickles, Olives	Normally safe as long as they look acceptable. Discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops. Discard if held above refrigerator temperature (40°F) over 2 hours. Discard if held above refrigerator temperature (40°F) over 2 hours. Discard 8 hours after power loss. May be kept safely unrefrigerated until power returns.

for 2 to 3 months. However, stays in the live-in chambers will not exceed 6 days.

Bodwell hopes the calorimeter will solve other mysteries in the nutrition world, too. "We want answers to questions on the effects of food on aging and on diet-related diseases." The calorimeter also will be instrumental in reassessing caloric values of new foods, particularly highly-processed items.

For more information on the calorimeter, contact: Dr. C. E. Bodwell, Protein Nutrition Laboratory, Building 308, Rm. 214, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center-East, Beltsville, Md. 20705. 301/344-2203.

— Irene Goins



One of six in the world, USDA's Room Calorimeter, when complete, will measure heat given off — calories used — by human subjects. In testing the calorimeter, one researcher steps inside, while another reviews the computer output.

Special Feature

Protein — A User's Guide

by Paula Klevan Zeller

If you're like most Americans, you know a little about protein and eat a lot of it. This valuable nutrient is found in meat, milk and many other healthful foods — often in greater amounts than we think.

Want to get the most out of protein and the foods that supply it? This "user's guide" tells you how.

The Inside and Outside Story

But first, what are proteins, anyway? Though you can't see them, you can see their handiwork. Your hair, nails and skin are products of proteins. So is your body frame, which gets its support from the muscles, cartilage and bones that proteins help to make.

This versatile nutrient also has a role in replacing worn-out cells, building new ones and maintaining the proper composition and amount of fluid in the blood and tissues. Some of the most important proteins — enzymes — speed up chemical reactions in the body, while others — hormones — regulate bodily functions.

It's not surprising that such a busy, efficient substance is also pretty complex. Human proteins are actually tangled, chain-like structures made of about 20 different amino acids.

Your body is manufacturing these structures even as you read this page. When the proteins in your foods are digested, their amino acids move into your bloodstream. Then your cells pick and choose the ones they need.

Sometimes, though, a cell needs an amino acid that isn't ready and waiting. No problem — if it's one of the 12 "nonessential" amino acids the body can make itself. But human cells can't make the other eight, so these are

called "essential" amino acids.

Animal protein foods — meat, fish, poultry, cheese, milk, yogurt and eggs — are the only foods that supply adequate amounts of all the essential amino acids. They are the "complete" proteins.

The vegetable protein foods — dry beans and peas (legumes), seeds and nuts — are "incomplete" because they each lack sufficient amounts of one or more of the essentials. Grains and other vegetable foods are also "incomplete" and provide even less protein per serving.*

But you can easily get all the essential amino acids by combining vegetable proteins with each other or with small amounts of animal foods. Most of us do this without even thinking when we eat foods such as peanut butter on whole wheat bread (nuts and grains) or macaroni and cheese (grains and animal protein). Combining legumes with grains, seeds or nuts also does the trick.

How Much is Enough?

The remarkable thing about proteins is that no one — from a fast-growing baby to a fast-running athlete — needs to eat a whole lot to get enough.

Let's say you eat cereal with milk for breakfast, a cheese sandwich and salad for lunch, and three ounces of roast turkey, a slice of bread and vegetables for dinner. If you're female, over 19 years of age, and neither pregnant nor nursing a baby, you've had at least as much protein as you need in one day: 44 grams (28 grams = 1 ounce).

This figure comes from a table of Recommended Dietary Allowances, or RDAs — amounts of nutrients the National Academy of Sciences (a private, non-profit organization) recommends healthy Americans consume every day to maintain good nutrition. The RDAs vary according to age and sex.

But no matter who we are, most of

*Because Americans frequently consume foods from this group, though, they provide significant protein to the average diet.

us get at least as much protein as we need. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's most recent Nationwide Food Consumption Survey shows that most Americans consume over 1½ times the protein RDA, says Anne Shaw, a nutritionist with USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service.

Is this a problem? For the average person, she says, there may be only one drawback to eating this much protein — eating too much fat, a nutrient found in many of the most popular protein foods.

"Many Americans have high blood cholesterol levels, which increases their risk of heart disease," explains Shaw. "Eating a diet high in fat — especially saturated fats and cholesterol — raises blood cholesterol levels in many people." The *Dietary Guidelines*, recently issued by USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, therefore say it's sensible to reduce your daily intake of both fat and cholesterol.

But fat and cholesterol are only part of the protein food story. These foods also contain a wide variety of other nutrients — some of which are under-represented in the American diet.

Shaw says the Nationwide Food Consumption Survey showed that many people *don't consume enough* calcium, magnesium, vitamin B₆ or iron — nutrients abundant in certain protein foods. In a more recent survey of women and young children, zinc also was found lacking.

The Balancing Act

With too little here and too much there, do you need a calculator or computer program to sort it all out? No! Shaw says it's a lot simpler than most people think to get the nutrients they need.

"No single food supplies all the essential nutrients in the right amounts," she says, "so if you want a healthful diet, eat a balanced one."

To get enough protein — and especially certain vitamins and minerals — most adults should eat 5-7 ounces (or 2-3 servings) of lean meat, fish or

poultry, or the equivalent, each day, says Shaw. With milk or equivalent dairy foods, it's 2 servings, or 3 for teens and pregnant or nursing women, or 4 for pregnant or nursing teens.

"And, to moderate fat and cholesterol intake, choose the lower fat versions of these foods more often," she advises. (See "Cutting Down On Fat" to compare the fat content of some protein foods.)

What if you tip the balance by eating fried chicken one day, or prefer whole milk to skim? Of course, the sky won't fall. But you may want to cut down on other fats to compensate for the extra fat and calories you've added.

How to be a Protein Pro

Here's how to get the most nutrition from protein foods while trimming down the fat that accompanies many of them.

Meat, Poultry and Fish

- Select lean cuts of meat, such as beef round, rump, sirloin tip, pork loin, leg of lamb and all veal cuts.
- Trim visible fat from meat before cooking. Remove skin from poultry.
- Roast, bake, broil or simmer these foods without added fat. Drain fat after cooking.
- Eat moderate servings.
- Use high-cholesterol organ meats, such as liver, only occasionally.
- Some processed meats come in lower-fat versions. Check the labels.

Eggs

- Egg yolks — the yellow — are high in cholesterol; egg whites have none at all. You can easily cut back on the yolk in most dishes and not even miss it:
 - Use one yolk per serving of scrambled eggs. A few extra egg whites will make up the difference in volume.
 - Substitute egg whites in recipes calling for whole eggs. For example, you can use two egg whites in place of each whole egg in muffins, cookies, puddings and pie fillings.

Dry Beans and Peas, Nuts, Seeds and Other Vegetable Proteins

- Use these foods to stretch meat, fish and poultry.
- Use nuts and seeds sparingly. Because of their high oil content, they are significantly fattier than lean meat.

Milk Products

- Lower your fat intake by using buttermilk, lowfat milk, lowfat yogurt and skim milk.
- Lowfat yogurt or whipped lowfat cottage cheese are good stand-ins for sour cream or mayonnaise.
- Use skim or lowfat milk in puddings, sauces, soups and baked products.
- Check product labels to find lower-fat cheeses. Mozzarella and other cheeses made with skim milk also have less fat.

Want To Know More?

Order a free copy of the *Dietary Guidelines* from: Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colo. 81009.

For a list of additional materials on the guidelines, write: Human Nutrition Information Service, USDA, Room 360, 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Contact your local chapter of the American Red Cross for information on a course USDA helped develop. "Better Eating for Better Health."

— Paula Klevan Zeller, a public affairs specialist with USDA's Office of Information, has written about food, nutrition and other consumer topics for seven years at USDA.

Cutting Down On Fat

A one-ounce serving of protein-rich lean meat, poultry or fish contains about 1 teaspoon of fat. Compared to that standard serving, the other protein foods listed here have more or less fat as shown.

2 oz. bologna	.....	4 t. fat
1/2 cup legumes	.....	-0- fat
2 T. peanut butter	.....	4 t. fat
1/4 cup seeds	.....	5 t. fat
1/3 cup nuts	.....	6 t. fat

Fats in dairy foods? This list shows how calcium-rich dairy foods compare to an 8-ounce serving of skim milk, which has only a trace of fat.

1 cup whole milk	.....	2 t. fat
1 cup 2% milk	.....	1 t. fat
8 oz. plain lowfat yogurt	.....	1 t. fat
1 1/2 oz. natural cheese	.....	3 t. fat
2 oz. American cheese	.....	4 t. fat



CAN



YOU

SOLVE...

The Case of the Careless Camper?

Out of the subdivision, driving down the interstate, Dan was on his way to the Appalachian Trail. He felt a rush of freedom and turned to Blazer (his black Labrador retriever), "Three whole days in the mountains, this is the life."

They reached camp mid-day. Heaving his backpack onto his shoulders and picking up the cooler, Dan braced himself for the long hike to the cabin. Blazer led the way, leaping and prancing.

He opened the door to the cabin. It must be 98 degrees in here, he thought. "Up for some trout fishing, Blazer? Just in case, the fish aren't bitin'; I brought chicken for supper. The pieces are frozen now but they'll thaw fast in this heat." With fishing rod and trail map, they headed for the lake.

By 5:30 the two were back at the cabin, fishless. "... Guess we have to eat camp-fried chicken tonight," he said. Dan drew some water from the nearby spring. He poured some out for Blazer. Blazer lapped thirstily. He boiled the rest to use later. He stoked the stove with wood and greased the skillet. The chicken cooked quickly.

When the chicken was charred, Dan cut a piece and saw that inside it was juicy, though slightly pink. "It's just right, Blazer," he said. "Chow time."

After dinner, Blazer slept under a tree, while Dan washed up. Then, still reading *Field and Stream*, Dan fell asleep in the cabin.

After another day of this, Dan fancied himself a real outdoorsman. Reality set in Sunday, though, "This July 4th weekend has been nice, Blazer girl, but I miss Pamela and there's an Orioles' game tonight. Time to pack up and head home."

Halfway home, Dan was gripped by abdominal cramps. He stopped at the first rest station. Next came the diarrhea. He made it home before the onset of vomiting. Sometime during the trip, Dan had made a food handling mistake, and *Campylobacter* had followed him home from camp. He wasn't the only one affected. Poor Blazer soon came down with the same "bug."

Where did Dan go wrong?

Was his mistake in

- A. Staying out too long in the hot summer sun?
- B. Thawing the chicken on the cabin table?
- C. Not cooking the chicken all the way through?

The answer is both B and C.

Campylobacter bacteria are often present in animals, unpasteurized milk, and untreated water. In this case, they must have been present on the raw chicken. *Campylobacter* grows fastest at temperatures of 90-110° F, too. So leaving the chicken to thaw for 5½ hours in the hot cabin allowed the bacteria to reach disease-causing levels.

Cooking the chicken thoroughly could have killed the rampant bacteria, but Dan didn't. Remember, there were still pink juices. Clear juices

mean chicken is done. Dan may also have infected other foods by using utensils that had touched the raw poultry.

Untreated water (streams, lakes, rivers, *not* tapwater) can also carry *Campylobacter*. Dan protected himself from this by boiling the spring water before drinking it. Using water purification tablets will also protect you. However, Dan gave Blazer a drink of the water *before* he boiled it. This may be why Blazer became ill.

Dan and Blazer will probably be pretty sick for several days, but the disease shouldn't have any lasting effect. While sick, though, they could excrete the organism and infect others.

To keep yourself *Campylobacter*-free

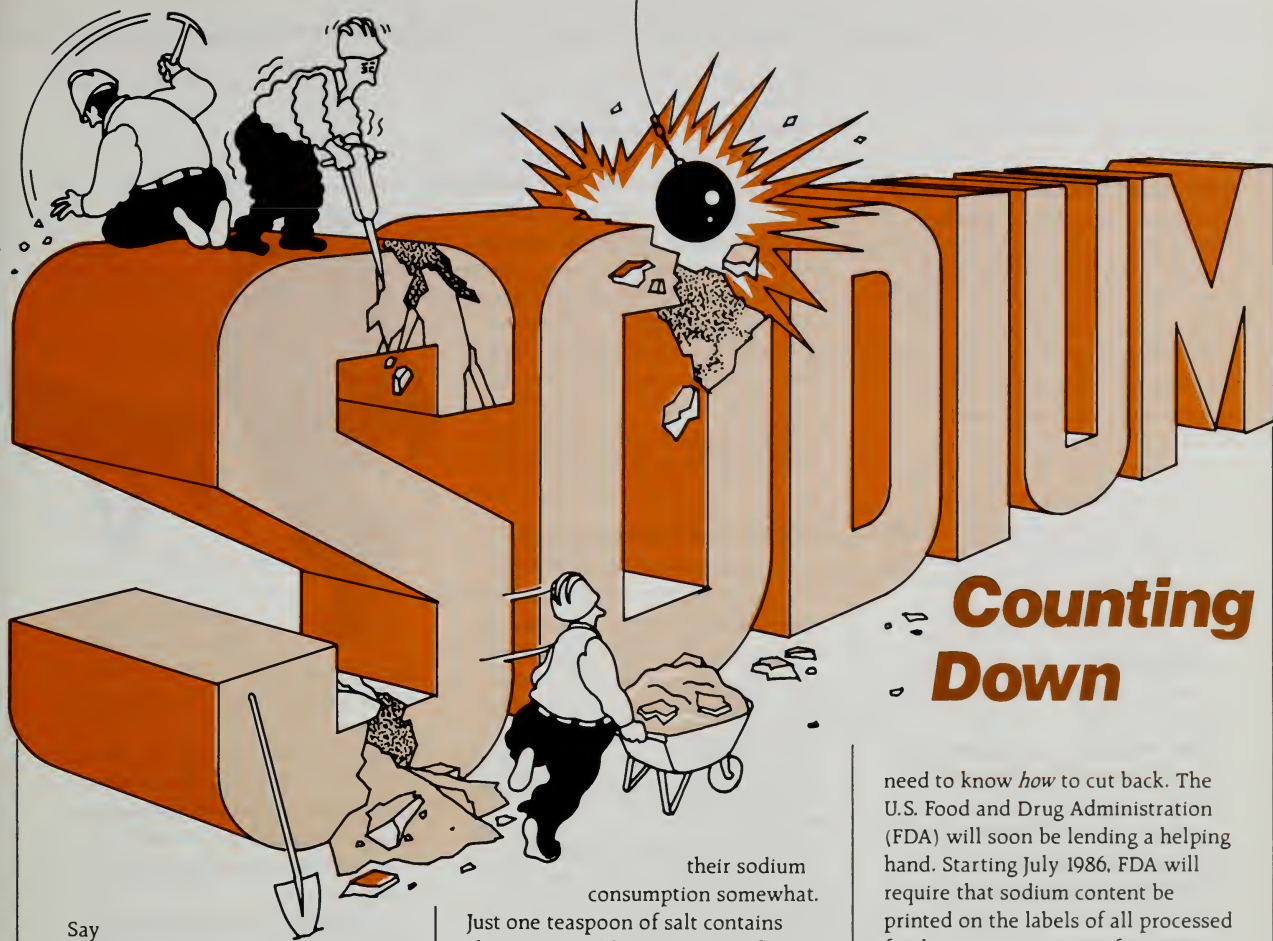
— Never thaw meat or poultry products at room temperature where bacteria thrive and multiply. It's better to thaw them in the refrigerator. And never leave any perishable food sitting out over 2 hours.

— Cook poultry to an internal temperature of 180-185° F. Don't be fooled by the charred appearance of chicken cooked over a campfire or grill. Though the outside may be done, if the inside is pink, the chicken is undercooked. Pre-cook chicken before grilling.

— Don't drink unpasteurized milk or untreated water.

— Handle sick pets with care. After contact, handwashing is a must.

— by Judy Liggett
and Susan Templin



Counting Down

Say you've already given up salted peanuts, taken the salt shaker off the table and you serve air-popped corn without either butter or salt. Have you solved your sodium problem?

Well, you're certainly doing a lot of the right things. But the sodium battle is bigger than just cutting down on obviously salty foods.

Where does sodium in our diet come from? While some estimates suggest that about a third of the sodium Americans eat every day is added either in cooking or at the table, sodium sneaks into our mouths in other ways too. Sodium occurs naturally in food—it's in surprising things like milk and celery. And manufacturers use sodium in processing food. For example, there is sodium in baking powder and in monosodium glutamate (MSG).

Who should be concerned? Most Americans might consider lowering

their sodium consumption somewhat.

Just one teaspoon of salt contains about 2,000 milligrams (mg.) of sodium—plenty for one day. Yet the average adult now takes in between 2,300 and 7,000 mg. a day. This puts many people well over the 1,100 to 3,300 mg. range estimated as "safe and adequate."

Why lower your sodium intake? Because excess sodium is one factor that has been linked to high blood pressure or hypertension. And hypertension can lead to stroke, heart attack and kidney disease. You need to be particularly concerned about watching your sodium if you're black, over 65 or have a family history of hypertension.

How many people have sodium-related problems? The National Institutes of Health report that some 60 million Americans suffer from hypertension. Over 50 percent of adult black Americans are hypertensive.

More sodium labeling on food will help. To cut back, of course, you

need to know *how* to cut back. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will soon be lending a helping hand. Starting July 1986, FDA will require that sodium content be printed on the labels of all processed foods giving nutrition information.

This means that over half of all processed foods—the non-meat and non-poultry items FDA regulates—will tell how much sodium they contain per serving. This information will be given in milligrams per serving. (One ounce equals 28.5 grams; one milligram is $\frac{1}{1000}$ th of a gram.)

Learning the new lower-sodium definitions. FDA's new rule also contains a precise "dictionary" of terms manufacturers of processed foods must use when they make a sodium claim.

- "Sodium free"—less than 5 mg. per serving.
- "Very low sodium"—35 mg. or less per serving.
- "Low sodium"—140 mg. or less per serving.
- "Reduced sodium"—at least a 75 percent reduction in the usual sodium level.

• “Unsalted” — processed without the salt normally added to such a product.

What about sodium labeling on processed meat and poultry products?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which monitors these foods, has been actively encouraging lower-sodium products and more sodium labeling. This encouragement *plus* consumer demand has resulted in several hundred sodium-labeled brands.

Approved sodium phrases? USDA already requires meat and poultry manufacturers to use the FDA phrases when they advertise the sodium content of a product. But USDA allows one additional phrase beyond the FDA list. “Lower” or “Less” sodium can be claimed on a meat or poultry item with 25 percent less sodium than normal.

Got it? Well, at least you know now what a milligram is and how to interpret the new sodium labeling.

Of course, there will still be some foods that don't give their sodium content. In those cases, you can get a rough idea of sodium content by looking at the ingredients.

Ingredients are listed, in order, by how much they contribute to total

product weight. For instance, shrimp soup might be mostly water, followed by milk, tomatoes, shrimp, salt and red pepper. You see that salt ranks 5th here. If you need the count in milligrams, write the manufacturer — the address is on the label.

You should also be alert to ingredients that are high in sodium — salt, of course, soy sauce, salt brine or any item with “salt” or “sodium” in the name.

Beyond reading product labels for sodium information, what else can you do to limit sodium intake?

The sodium balancing act.

In cooking, there are several things you can do to reduce the sodium content of meals. First, try to balance the sodium content of the various parts of the meal or the whole day's menus. For example, if you have a high-sodium main dish, serve low-sodium side dishes. If you eat a high-sodium breakfast, plan a lower sodium lunch or dinner.

Start with moderate changes in sodium consumption. That way you can cut back on your taste for salt gradually. You weren't born with a preference for salt, and it can be “unlearned.”

When menu planning, remember that unprocessed foods usually contain less sodium than processed foods. If you start from scratch, you're in charge of the amount of salt you add. Consider the sodium content of all the ingredients in a recipe. For instance, if you use cured meat, dehydrated or canned soup, cheese, or canned vegetables in a dish, you may not need to add any salt.

You may also want to look for seasonings and sauces with less sodium, or use lemon juice, spices, or herbs — such as onion or garlic powder (not onion or garlic salt), paprika, pepper, curry or dill — for flavor.

At the table, taste your food before you salt it. If you must add salt, try one shake instead of two. Watch the amount of prepared sauces or seasonings you add. And try lemon juice or vinegar for zest.



Dining out need not be a problem for a sodium-watcher either. Choose foods without sauces, or ask for sauce “on the side” so you can control the amount. In better restaurants, you can ask that no additional salt be added to your food in the kitchen. And, just as you would at home, balance the sodium content of your meal when ordering.

So whether you're shopping for food, preparing it at home, or eating out, there are choices you can make if you want to lower your sodium intake. In the long run, cutting down may add up to better health.

For Further Reading

“The Sodium Content of Your Food.” USDA. Lists the sodium content of 789 food and nonprescription drug items. Costs \$2.25 from the Consumer Information Center, Dept. 114P, Pueblo, Colo. 81009.

“A Word About Low-Sodium Diets.” Free from FDA, HFE-88, Rockville, Md. 20857.

“Do Yourself A Flavor.” Tips for cooking with herbs and spices. Free from the Consumer Information Center, Dept. 538N, Pueblo, Colo. 81009.

“Cooking Without Your Salt Shaker.” Costs \$4.50 from the American Heart Association, 7320 Greenville Ave., Dallas, Texas 75231.

Consideration #1: You're probably getting more sodium than you need.

The body needs *some* sodium. It attracts and holds water in the blood vessels, making sure there's enough blood to carry oxygen and nutrients. But most Americans get several times the sodium they need every day.

Consideration #2: Try including more potassium-rich fresh fruits and vegetables in your daily diet.

Bananas are a great source of potassium. Why should you eat more fruits and vegetables? Many researchers think you need about twice as much potassium every day as sodium. This 2-to-1 ratio helps maintain healthy blood pressure.

Counting Down, Food by Food

Individual products vary, so the sodium content of many items is shown here as a range from minimum to maximum.

Product	Serving Size	Sodium Content	Product	Serving Size	Sodium Content
Fruits, Fruit Juices — fresh, frozen, canned	½ cup	8 mg.	Desserts		
Vegetables			ice cream, ice milk, sherbert	½ cup	35 to 80 mg.
fresh, frozen,	½ cup	35 mg. or less	cookies	1	5 to 50 mg.
canned or with sauce	½ cup	140 to 460 mg.	frozen fruit pies	1 small slice	180 mg.
Pasta, cooked without salt	½ cup	5 mg. or less	cake, unfrosted	1 small slice	130 to 310 mg.
Hot cereals			candy	1 ounce	2 to 80 mg.
regular	½ cup	5 mg. or less	Sweets & Sweet Drinks		
quick cooking or instant	½ cup	100 to 360 mg.	sugar, syrups, jams, jellies	1 tablespoon	20 mg. or less
Cold cereals	1 ounce	100 to 360 mg.	sodas, fruit-flavored drinks	per 8 ounces	0 to 80 mg.
Bread*	1 slice	110 to 150 mg.	Snack foods		
Crackers*	2 or 3	110 to 150 mg.	nuts, unsalted	1 ounce	5 mg.
Milk, plain	1 cup	125 mg.	nuts, salted	1 ounce	150 to 300 mg.
Cheese*			popcorn	1 ounce	5 mg.
natural	1 ounce	75 to 300 mg.	caramel-coated popcorn	1 ounce	150 to 300 mg.
processed/cheese food	1 ounce	350 to 450 mg.	potato chips	14 chips	150 to 300 mg.
creamed/low-fat cottage cheese	½ cup	450 mg.	corn chips	14 chips	150 to 300 mg.
Eggs	1	60 mg.	Sauces, Seasonings, Specialty Foods		
Meat			soy sauce	1 tablespoon	1,000 mg.
fresh	1 ounce	15 to 25 mg.	catsup, steak sauce, tartar sauce, chili sauce, Worcestershire sauce, mustard	1 tablespoon	125 to 275 mg.
sausage*	1 ounce	250 to 450 mg.			
luncheon meats*	1 ounce	250 to 450 mg.	pickles		
frankfurters*	1 ounce	250 to 450 mg.	dill	1 average	928 mg.
bacon, cooked	1 slice	65 to 170 mg.	small sweet	1 average	128 mg.
ham*	1 ounce	250 to 450 mg.	pickle relish	1 tablespoon	100 to 125 mg.
Poultry			olives, ripe black	3	100 to 125 mg.
fresh	1 ounce	15 to 25 mg.	Butter, Cream, Oils		
canned	1 ounce	90 to 150 mg.	unsalted butter/margarine	1 teaspoon	1 mg.
Fish			salted butter/margarine	1 teaspoon	45 mg.
fin (shellfish is higher)	1 ounce	15 to 25 mg.	creams, including sour cream	1 tablespoon	6 mg.
canned	1 ounce	90 to 150 mg.	powdered, imitation creams	1 tablespoon	12 mg.
Convenience foods*			vegetable oil	1 tablespoon	-0-
pot pies	8 ounces	800 to 1400 mg.	prepared salad dressing	1 tablespoon	100 to 250 mg.
ravioli, canned	8 ounces	800 to 1400 mg.			
pizza	2-3 slices	800 to 1400 mg.			
soups (canned/dehydrated)	1 cup	800 to 1300 mg.			

*Asterisked items were found to be among the top five contributors to sodium in the American diet. This is based not on their sodium content alone, but also on their popularity and the frequency with which they're eaten. (HHS survey data, 1976-1980.)

FOOD NEWS Quiz #3

Why Can't I Bring My Genoa Salami Back From Vacation in Italy?

The "why" is to protect American livestock and poultry, explains Bonnie Aikman, a spokesperson with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

"Most people don't realize animal disease organisms can live in sausages and other meat products for months or even survive processing. Foreign insects and diseases can also cause severe damage to U.S. crops, forests and gardens," Aikman says.

Therefore, it's illegal for travelers to bring most meats into this country. Most fresh fruits and vegetables, plants in soil or anything that could harbor harmful agricultural organisms are normally prohibited too.

Why is this a problem? The consequences of inadvertently importing harmful diseases or insects can be devastating. For instance, some 15 years ago, imported diseased parrots spread Newcastle disease to U.S. poultry. Some 12 million sick or exposed laying hens and other birds had to be destroyed. The Newcastle outbreak cost taxpayers \$56 million!

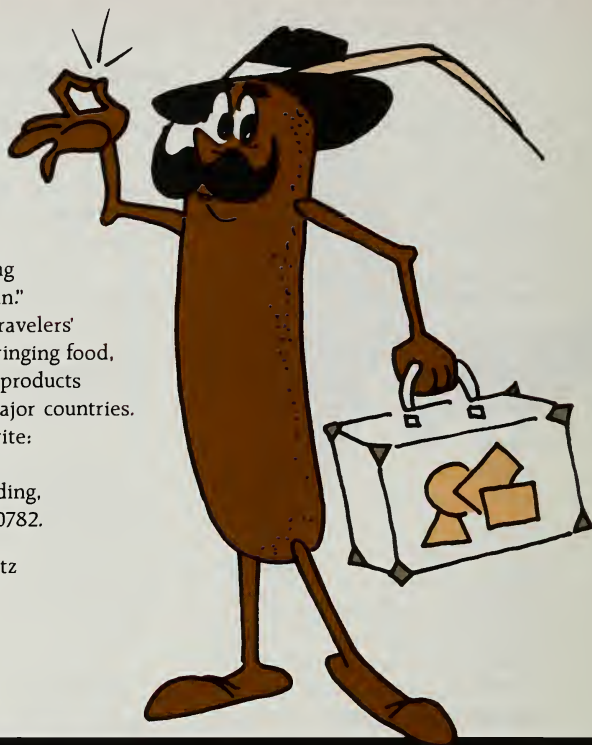
Generally, individuals cannot bring fresh meat and poultry across U.S. borders. But commercially canned meat is permitted from most countries if it is sealed and cooked in the can to make it shelf-stable without refrigeration — a process that destroys harmful organisms.

"It's worth knowing the rules because any illegal agricultural products seized by a USDA inspector are destroyed without reimbursement," Aikman says. "Also, travelers can be fined up to \$50 for not declaring such

items or attempting to smuggle them in."

APHIS offers "Travelers' Tips" on legally bringing food, plant, and animal products back from most major countries. For a free copy, write: USDA-APHIS, G-187 Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

— Herb Gantz



SALAD BAR SHOPPING. Variety and convenience have made salad bars a big hit with consumers, but is there an added price-tag? A fall 1985 survey of three Washington, D.C. supermarkets showed that you could be paying from 2 to 7 times more for items at the salad bar compared to elsewhere in the store. The full study is available from Dianne Odland, USDA-HNIS, Rm. 330, Bldg. 307, BARC-East, Beltsville, Md. 20705. Phone: 301/344-2513.

the Children's Page

SOMETHING is Trying to Eat Your Food!

You know all about storybook monsters that like to eat things up, right?

There's the giant in "Jack and the Beanstalk" who wants Jack as a snack.

There are the "wild things" in WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE that dance with Max in his dreams when he's feeling very naughty. Max decides it's time to be good again when the monsters threaten to eat him up.

But you probably *didn't know* that in real life there are tiny "monsters" always ready to attack your food.

They are called germs or bacteria and molds. They are so small you can only see them under a microscope.

These food destroyers live in soil, air and water. They are also in the bodies of people and animals.

And if you're not careful, these tiny villains can "eat up" your food before you can.

What's going on? Growing things — like fruits and vegetables and food

animals — are naturally protected against bacteria and other food destroyers.

Once growing things are picked, though, or animals become food, they lose their protection.

Then it's like a race between people wanting to use the food, and bacteria and other food destroyers trying to get it first.

Who are these villains? You've probably seen the spoilers that cause food to go bad in the refrigerator.

They leave their footprints on fuzzy, blue mold on forgotten bread. They also cause mushy spots in fruits and vegetables.

But compared with the food poisoners, the spoilers are nice guys. They change the look and smell of food so you know not to eat it.

The food poisoners, which can make you sick, are much trickier. They don't change the smell, look or odor of food. So you don't know they're there.

You may have heard of some of

them. Staph and salmonella cause people to be sick at their stomachs and have stomach cramps and diarrhea. Sometimes food poisoning makes people very sick.

To stay safe from the food destroyers, you have to be careful with food.

Follow these safety rules:

1. Keep food cold — Cold temperatures keep most of the food poisoners from growing fast enough to make you sick.

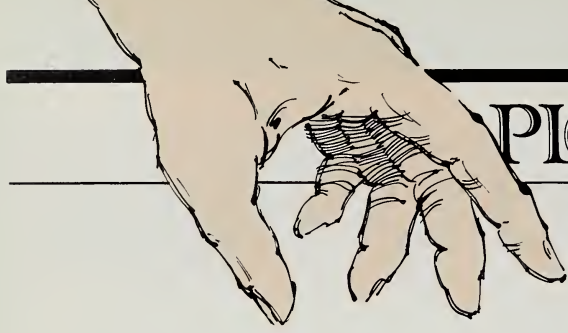
2. Cook food well — Cooking kills the food poisoners. Have you seen mom or dad check the roast with a meat thermometer? That's to make sure it's safely cooked.

3. Keep food clean — Wash your hands with hot water and soap before you fix food, and keep everything in the kitchen clean. Most food destroyers are "wiped out" by hot water and soap.

— Mary Ann Parmley

PARENTS, for more information on safeguarding food, order: *The Safe Food Book* and *Safe Food To Go Free* from: Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colo. 81009.





PICK of the PUBS

With summer's fast-paced, warm weather lifestyle just ahead, many consumers are asking how long food will keep in the refrigerator and freezer. They also want to know how to take care of food on picnics, camping trips or anytime they're away from home. Answering these questions, *The Food Keeper*, one of the free or nearly free publications listed here, gives storage times for food in the refrigerator, freezer and pantry. And SAFE FOOD TO GO, USDA's new booklet on the proper care of food away from home, is now available from the Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colorado.

— Angela Judge

Currently Available Free

The Food Keeper. Guidelines on how long to keep your food on the shelf and in the refrigerator and freezer. Send a legal-sized, self-ad-

dressed-stamped envelope (SASE) to the Food Marketing Institute, 1750 K St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Nutrition for the Fitness Challenge. Sound food advice for fitness

buffs, emphasizing that proper diet and exercise must work hand-in-hand. Send a legal-sized SASE to the American Heart Association, National Center, Box NF, 7320 Greenville Ave., Dallas, Tex. 75231.

Order these publications from the national **Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colo. 81009**. Make checks out to: Superintendent of Documents. There is a \$1.00 handling fee if you order two or more free publications. Make sure your envelope includes this order check-off form, your filled-in mailing label and payment (if necessary).

Food Care & Nutrition

- ___ 597P **Safe Food To Go.**
Free Precautions to take when picnicking, tail-gating or just brown-bagging it. Discusses the five major types of food poisoning and how to avoid them. USDA, 1985. 20 pp.
- ___ 522P **Please Pass That Woman Some More Calcium and Iron.** Why a diet rich in

calcium and iron is important to a woman's health. FDA, 1984. 6 pp.

- ___ 515P **A Compendium on Fats.**
Free All about fats — saturated, unsaturated, and polyunsaturated — and what they do to your blood. FDA, 1983. 3 pp.
- ___ 517P **Diet and the Elderly.**
Free Discusses the specific nutrient needs of this growing segment of the population and explains the possible dangers of food and drug interactions. FDA, 1985. 4 pp.

Food Dollars

- ___ 419P **How to Buy Economically:**
\$.50 **A Food Buyer's Guide.** How to cut costs on meat, poultry, eggs, milk, fruits

and vegetables. USDA, 1981. 28 pp.

- ___ 421P **Making Food Dollars Count.** A two-week plan to help the shopper on a limited budget meet nutritional needs. USDA, 1983. 26 pp.

Children

- ___ 507P **Dennis Takes a Poke at Poison.** Dennis the Menace learns about poisons in the home and how to tell if something is safe to eat. FDA, 1981. 16 pp.
- ___ 412P **Visiting People on a Dairy Farm.** For early elementary school children, an illustrated tour of a working dairy farm. USDA, 1981. 17 pp.

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The Consumer's Almanac

Highlighting Food Events for the Summer Months

Event	Theme	Contact
National Asparagus Month May 1-31	Easy preparation, diet aspects of asparagus	Washington Asparagus Growers Association Sunnyside, Wash. (509) 837-6022
La Fête: National Festival of Food and Cookery June 1-Aug. 31	New Orleans' summer festival of Cajun and Creole food, wine and music	Mark Romig, Exec. Dir. La Fête 580 Oil and Gas Bldg. New Orleans, La. (504) 525-4143
International Sausage Festival June 28	Taste the various types of sausages while you listen to bluegrass and country music	John Gallagher P.O. Box 276 Battle Creek, Mich. (616) 965-5171
National Ice Cream Month July 1-31	To call attention to a "nutritious and wholesome food enjoyed by over 90 percent of Americans"	Tobi Rozen International Assn. of Ice Cream Mfrs. 888 16th St., N.W. Washington, D.C. (202) 296-4250
National "July Belongs to Blueberries" Month	Showcasing July as Blueberry Month	North American Blueberry Council Box 166 Marmora, N.J. (609) 399-1559
Sun Prairie's Sweet Corn Festival Aug. 16-17	All the hot, buttered sweet corn you can eat, plus parade, food, exhibits, auto/bike/foot races	Carolyn Rusk Chamber of Commerce 133 W. Main Sun Prairie, Wisc. (608) 837-4547
Maryland State Championship Chili Jamboree and Cook-off Aug. 29-31	To select Maryland's chili champion	Ronald L. Rice Ali Ghan Shrine Temple Box 1416 Cumberland, Md. (301) 722-5970

— Liz Lapping

